

To see if the Town of Harvard recognizes the local impacts of climate change and chooses to address these impacts by adopting the following resolution:

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has a legally binding statewide requirement of an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels by 2050;

The local impacts of climate change are presently evident and are expected to increase in intensity from more severe storm events, increasing heat and drought, increasing pestilence and disease, increasing impacts to water and soil resources, and increasing impacts to native natural and agricultural flora and fauna, resulting in damage to public and private lands and ecosystems in Harvard, and harming the health and welfare of its residents;

Harvard is dependent on greenhouse gas emitting fossil fuels for mobility, heating and cooling, and other basic needs but the availability of energy from renewable sources is growing and becoming more cost effective;

Harvard recognizes that actions taken to address climate change will also benefit our natural resources, be positive for public health, support our quality of life and assure our community's vibrancy well into the future.

NOW BE IT RESOLVED,

1 - Harvard affirms its support for the greenhouse gas reduction goals established by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and for any subsequently adopted modifications of those goals, and affirms its willingness to change its practices, policies, and procedures in support of achieving the goals established by the Commonwealth in order to mitigate the impacts of climate change;

2 - Harvard commits to evaluating and mitigating the potential negative impacts of climate change associated with all purchases, public projects, planning processes, and policies;

3 - Harvard commits to developing and requiring an environmental assessment process to review all purchases, public projects, planning processes and policies and to make this information readily available to town residents specifically on warrants requiring citizen approval; and

4 - Harvard commits to addressing climate resiliency and adaptation by coordinating the work of Town boards, committees, commissions, and other entities to plan together how to respond to the threats climate change may have on the built environment, natural resources, and the health of its residents.

To implement the above, the Harvard Select Board will establish the means by which this resolution will be achieved and will provide an update to the town on its progress towards establishing the infrastructure in which to accomplish this resolution within one year of its passage. Thereafter reports will be made annually at Town Meeting on the progress the Town has made in regards to this resolution.